

Room 56-423

June 1, 1967

To the Editor
The New York Times
229 West 43rd Street
New York, New York

Dear sir:

Your thoughtful editorial of May 31, commenting on the different and conflicting nature of the U.S. commitments in Vietnam and in the Middle East, is a significant contribution to clarity in national policy. Clearly, the existence and legitimate interests of Israel, like those of her neighbors, must be protected by international action. Restoration of effective U.S. presence at the danger points and UN-sponsored guarantee of free navigation are urgently needed.

But the present crisis must be seen as primarily a crisis of power and prestige for the U.N. For this the U.S. Government bears the main burden of responsibility. Nothing has contributed more to humiliate the UN than our Government's repeated rebuffs in connection with the Vietnam war.

The Johnson Administration has chosen to disregard the United Nations as well as world opinion in the name of our pretended Vietnam commitments. It is hard to see how a Government which day after day, against the expressed advice of the UN, is bombing the cities of Vietnam, can honestly undertake to oppose illegal unilateral actions by other governments or can be trusted to make good its legitimate commitments elsewhere in the world.

The moral and political leadership of the United States in world affairs can be restored only by arresting and reversing the present course of our Vietnam policy.

Noam Chomsky, Prof. of Humanities

Salvador E. Luria, Prof. of Biology

Philip Morrison, Prof. of Physics